

The City of Calgary Parks and a University of Calgary research team invite you to contribute to our oral history project – part of a biodiversity plan for The City of Calgary in support of its pledge to the Durban Commitment.

The City of Calgary has committed to sign the Durban Commitment, an international agreement on biodiversity directed at municipalities. We have partnered with LAB ([Local Action for Biodiversity](#), a global urban biodiversity program) to develop broad strategies and specific actions to protect and enhance Calgary's ecosystems and biodiversity.

A biodiversity plan is being developed in adherence to LAB requirements. A key component of this plan is community engagement and outreach, both in helping to develop the plan and as a strategy within the plan for continued engagement.

At our initial stakeholder engagement sessions held last year to help outline key sections of the plan, we heard that an oral history of Calgary's biodiversity would add a valuable human dimension to the plan. This is an important tool in helping communicate the importance of biodiversity and open spaces to Calgarians.

The oral history project: stories of change

A vital component of our biodiversity plan will be its human dimension: the personal experiences of environmental change in Calgary. We hope that oral histories – stories of Calgarians' perceptions of changes in their parks, urban landscapes and overall environment – will help accomplish the goal of elevating the meaning and importance of local biodiversity.

Our oral history project intends to highlight the following themes:

- Changes in experiences with wildlife (their numbers and patterns)
- Changes in perception of our parks (their use, size, composition, etc.)
- Changes in our rivers and wetlands
- Changes in neighbourhood environments (community gardens, street trees, food production, front- and back-yard activities, etc.)

In partnership with the University of Calgary, a research project exploring these broader questions is being undertaken. The questions we're looking to explore are:

- What have you experienced in terms of biodiversity/environmental change in Calgary?
- What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experience of biodiversity/environmental change?

- How has biodiversity change in Calgary affected you and other citizens of Calgary?
- What are your hopes regarding biodiversity in Calgary?
- What are your concerns regarding biodiversity in Calgary?

Commitment

Sessions will be conducted in May. We anticipate up to 4 hours time commitment which includes small group discussions and a possible videotaped interview.

Please reply to this email by 4:00pm March 17th if:

- a) You are interested in participating by tell your story about one of the above mentioned themes; and
- b) There is anyone else you think might be interested in participating (organizations, professionals or interested individuals).

For those who express interest, a second email will follow with further details, dates, times and a location. We do have a maximum number of participants but are happy to hear from all interested parties for this project as there might be potential future opportunities. Please forward this email to anyone you feel might be interested in collaborating on this project.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project and biodiversity in Calgary.

Please RSVP to Steven.Snell@calgary.ca. We value your feedback and look forward to discussing your ideas, comments and observations. If you have any questions, you can also call Steven at (403) 268-3527.

Best regards,

Steven.

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